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## FINAL SENTENCES IMPOSED IN CASES INVOLVING 13 PROPRIETORS OF AZ MOTELS WHO USED THEIR BUSINESSES TO HARBOR SMUGGLED ALIENS

PHOENIX - On March 26, 2008, U.S. District Judge Frederick J. Martone imposed sentences of probation, fines and forfeiture on the final two defendants in cases involving 13 owners and former owners of six motels on Main Street in Mesa, Ariz. The motel owners had been charged in separate indictments with conspiracy to harbor illegal aliens based on allegations that they had used their businesses to facilitate organized human smuggling. The charges followed a nine-month undercover probe by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

According to the indictments, on numerous occasions the defendants rented rooms to undercover officers posing as human smugglers, with some charging the smugglers higher rates than their ordinary customers. The indictments described how some of the defendants coached the undercover officers on ways to conceal their smuggling activities, advising them to register under false names, rent multiple rooms, and park their vehicles in places that would avoid attracting attention.

The table below provides the information about the sentences, including probation, fines and forfeiture amounts that resulted in each case.

Case No. & Motel	Defendant	Sentence	Charges	Forfeiture	Judge
CR05-1136 Kiva Lodge Motel	Babulal Patel	5 years probation	8:1324(a)(1)(A)(v)(I) - Conspiracy to harbor illegal aliens	\$150,000 (civil & criminal combined)	Stephen M. McNamee
	Gitaben Patel	3 years probation	18:4 - misprision of a felony		
CR05-1137 HiWay Host Motel	Ashok R. Patel	364 days probation & \$500 fine	18:4 - misprision of a felony	\$150,000 (civil only)	Mary H. Murguia
	Amarkumar Patel	1 year probation	18:3 & 8:1325 - accessory after the fact to illegal entry		

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Case No. & Motel	Defendant	Sentence	Charges	Forfeiture	Judge
CR05-1138 Majestic Guest Inn	Anand B. Bhakta	3 years probation & \$25,000 fine	8:1324(a)(1)(A)(v)(I) - Conspiracy to harbor illegal aliens	\$300,000 (civil & criminal combined)	Frederick J. Martone
	Sunita Bhakta	3 years probation & \$5,000 fine	18:4 - misprision of a felony		
CR05-1139 Roadrunner Motel	Bhupendra Patel	5 years probation	8:1324(a)(1)(A)(v)(I) - Conspiracy to harbor illegal aliens	\$250,000 (civil & criminal combined)	Frederick J. Martone
	Mahduben Patel	5 years probation	8:1324(a)(1)(A)(v)(I) - Conspiracy to harbor illegal aliens		
CR05-1140 Westnaire Motel	Bharabhai Bhakta	5 years probation & \$6,000 fine	8:1324(a)(1)(A)(v)(I) - Conspiracy to harbor illegal aliens	\$200,000 (civil & criminal combined)	Roslyn O. Silver
	Mahduben Bhakta	5 years probation	8:1324(a)(1)(A)(v)(I) - Conspiracy to harbor illegal aliens		
	Roshan B. Bhakta	5 years probation & \$10,000 fine	8:1324(a)(1)(A)(v)(I) - Conspiracy to harbor illegal aliens		
CR05-1141 Centebare Suites	Pravinkumar Patel	2 years probation	8:1324(a)(1)(A)(v)(I) - Conspiracy to harbor illegal aliens	\$250,000 (civil & criminal combined)	Neil V. Wake
	Sheilaben Patel	2 years probation	8:1324(a)(1)(A)(v)(I) - Conspiracy to harbor illegal aliens		

The total combined criminal and civil forfeiture in the group of cases was \$1.3 million. The total of the fines imposed in the group of cases was \$46,500.

The criminal probe focusing on the Mesa motels formally began in February 2005 after ICE received several leads from the public regarding possible human smuggling activity at the establishments. Border Patrol agents with U.S. Customs and Border Protection as well as the Mesa Police Department assisted ICE in the ensuing investigation. The prosecution was handled by Joseph Koehler, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Phoenix.

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